

California State Prison (CSP-Solano)
Facility Inspection
2004-2005 Grand Jury Report

I. Reason For Inspection

California Penal Code §919(b) mandates that the Grand Jury inspect and report on the condition and management of prisons within the County of Solano.

II. Procedure

- Interviewed the warden's staff
- Toured the facility
- Reviewed the vocational, health care, education, substance abuse programs and Prison Industry Authority (PIA)

III. Background

California State Prison Solano (CSP-Solano) opened in August 1984, and covers 146 acres. CSP-Solano was designed and built to house 2,610 inmates. On the day of the Grand Jury's inspection, CSP-Solano inmate population was 5,848. Staff has converted the gymnasium and other buildings, originally designed for other use, to housing units to accommodate the inmates' housing shortage. On the day of the inspection, there were over 1,600 inmates housed in the gymnasium alone!

CSP-Solano is a level two and three facility. Level two inmates are housed separately from level three inmates. Level three inmates are a higher security risk and require more supervision. CSP-Solano has a staff of approximately 1,200 and a yearly budget over \$110,000,000. CSP-Solano has little control over the number of inmates that are transferred to its facility.

On the day of the inspection, the facility was clean, well organized and the inmates were orderly. Staff was enthusiastic with the presence of the Grand Jury. Staff appeared committed to developing a healthy environment for themselves and the inmates. The state prison's non-smoking rule that will be implemented state-wide on July 1, 2005. CSP-Solano's mission is to provide the opportunity for meaningful work, training, education and other programs. Inmates must either work or go to school.

One program that fulfills CSP-Solano's mission for the inmates is the Prison Industry Authority (PIA). Some of the CSP-Solano PIA programs are:

Metal Fabrication

This program employs 140 inmates. They produce a variety of furniture items for state prisons, county jails, and government detention facilities.

Bindery

This program employs 115 inmates. They produce a variety of types and sizes of ring binders, conference folios, business cards holders, ID holders, Cal Trans soft signs and disabled person placards for the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Laundry

The PIA laundry employs 83 inmates working three shifts, six days a week. They process linen and clothing for CSP-Solano, California Medical Facility, Sonoma State Hospital, Yountville Veterans Home and San Quentin State Prison.

Optical Laboratory

The lab employs 57 inmates. Additionally, there are 23 inmates assigned to the vocational lens-grinding program. Prescription and safety eyewear are produced for prison inmates, youth authority wards, state hospitals and for state and local government employees who are required to wear safety eyewear as a condition of employment. Written prescriptions are sent to the lab for the inmates to produce the lenses and place them into frames. The lab produces 83,200 pair of glasses per year. The vocational lens grinding program shares space with the PIA lab and the students are paid by the PIA.

The PIA developed the inmate employability program to enhance the ability of inmates to obtain private sector jobs upon their release from prison. The program documents and certifies an inmate's skills, work experience and positive work habits acquired while in the program. For those inmates who qualify for these programs, PIA provides training through outside certification programs. The Optical Lab provides a widely recognized exam through the American Board of Opticians, which certifies that an inmate has obtained the minimum level of skill required to dispense eyeglass lenses. At the time of this inspection there were currently 20 inmates housed at CSP-Solano who were certified Opticians. The CSP-Solano PIA programs produce quality products, develop working skills and reduce prison violence.

The PIA at CSP-Solano employs approximately 460 inmates. The PIA is self-supporting and does not get an annual appropriation from the State. The California penal code prohibits PIA from selling its products and services to the general public. The California PIA employs over 6,000 inmates. The California PIA Prison System annual revenue is \$160,000,000. Twenty percent of all inmates' wages are deducted for court ordered restitution fines and transferred to the Crime Victims' Restitution Fund. Within PIA, CSP-Solano has a sales value of production projected at \$9,694,000. Their projected gross profit is \$1,800,000.

IV. Finding and Recommendations

Finding #1 – CSP-Solano does not have enough housing to accommodate its inmate population.

Recommendation #1 – The affected agencies need to bring into balance the available space with the number of prisoners.

Finding #2 – CSP-Solano offers their inmates many different self-help programs including the PIA.

Recommendation #2 – Continue the PIA program and work toward increasing the inmate work force.

V. Comments

The staff of CSP-Solano is to be commended for their creativity, leadership and management of the facility. The PIA programs provide many opportunities for inmates to prepare themselves for the outside world upon their release.

VI. Affected Agencies

- California State Prison-Solano
- California Department of Corrections